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JOHN HOBART HOSKINS

JOHN HOBART HOSKINS
(1896-1957)

On February 8, 1957, death came quietly to Professor John Hobart Hoskins, Head of the Department of Botany and Bacteriology, University of Cincinnati, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Lloyd Library and Museum. With his passing the scientific world lost an internationally recognized authority in paleobotany, an outstanding teacher, and skilled administrator.

Born on January 17, 1896, in Carmel, Indiana, John Hobart was the second son of Cicely Lancaster and John Bartlett Hoskins. Having been brought up in a Quaker family, he naturally went to Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1919 after serving in the U. S. Army from October 4, 1917 until December 17, 1918. Immediately he embarked on graduate studies in botany at the University of Chicago, readily qualifying for a fellowship and completing his work for the Master's degree in 1920. Then, during the summers of 1921 and 1922 he studied marine algae under the guidance of the distinguished Swedish algologist Kylin at the Puget Sound Biological Station. At the University of Chicago he came in contact with the outstanding morphologists of that period, John Merle Coulter, Charles Joseph Chamberlain, William J. G. Land, and the paleobotanist, Adolph C. Noé. Studying under these men, John Hobart chose plant morphology as his major field of interest, especially the morphology of fossil plants, and received his Doctor of Philosophy, Summa Cum Laude, in 1924. It was here at the University of Chicago that he cut the first American coal ball thereby opening up a whole new field of paleobotanical research undeviatingly pursued by him throughout his life. From Chicago he went as a National Research Council Fellow (1924-1925) to Europe, where he continued his paleobotanical studies and met many distinguished colleagues in his field, among them D. H. Scott and A. C. Seward.

Except for a short interval of two years (1920-1921) during which he taught at Whittier College, California, and summer sessions from 1925 until 1933 during which he taught at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, he spent his entire academic life at the University of Cincinnati. On his return from Europe he was appointed

Assistant Professor in 1925, promoted to Associate Professor in 1927, and full Professor in 1937. In 1931 he was appointed Head of the Department of Botany and Bacteriology, a position which he held until his death. During World War II his career was interrupted once more as he became a Training Specialist in the Office of the Quartermaster General from 1943 until 1945.

In addition to his teaching and administrative duties, he served from 1938 on as a member of the Board of Directors of the Lloyd Library and Museum, and later, in like capacity, on the Board of the Cincinnati Country Day School. He also gave freely of his time and counsel as Associate Editor of the *American Midland Naturalist* over a period of twenty years and, for a similar number of years, as Associate Editor of *Lloydia*, of which he was co-founder.

His broad scientific and professional interests prompted him to join the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Botanical Society of America, the Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois Academies of Science, the Paleontological Society of America, the International Society of Plant Morphologists, and the American Association of University Professors. Several societies honored Dr. Hoskins in various ways. He was elected President of the Ohio Academy of Science, twice Chairman of the Paleobotanical Section of the Botanical Society of America, and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, of the Ohio and Indiana Academies of Science, and to membership in Phi Beta Kappa, the Society of the Sigma Xi, and the social fraternity Alpha Tau Omega.

Dr. Hoskins was an inspiring teacher, whose enthusiasm attracted numerous students to botany. Many of them followed his example and became paleobotanists receiving their training from him. Superb contributions dealing mainly with beautifully preserved fossil plants found in coal balls and the excellent paleobotanical collection built up by him represent his scientific legacy.

Whether in the laboratory or on field trips, "J. H.", as he was fondly called by all, was happiest when working on fossil plants. But he was always ready to help his students with their work or, if necessary, with their personal problems. His house was constantly open to them and his hospitality was unlimited. His lively personality, open manner, quick wit, and hearty laugh will never be forgotten by those who were privileged to work with him and know him as a friend.

Surviving him are his widow, Gertrude Keller Hoskins, his sons, John H. Jr., William K., and Robert I., his mother and his brother, Halford L. Hoskins.

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